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FOR NEA/ELA, ISN/RA, NEA/IR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/19/2018

TAGS: PARM KNNP MNUC IR JO

SUBJECT: CONVEYING THE UPDATED P5+1 PACKAGE FOR IRAN -  
JORDANIAN RESPONSE

REF: STATE 64530

Classified By: Ambassador David Hale  
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (S/NF) Reftel points were delivered to FM Salah Al-Bashir by NEA/IR Acting Director Philo Dibble on June 15 (Ambassador was present). In general, the FM portrayed Iran's nuclear program as nothing more than a bargaining chip, saying that Iran has been "studying" and "declaring" its nuclear intentions for almost three decades now, but with nothing to show for it. Ultimately, Bashir judged that it was not in Iran's interest to provoke a nuclear arms race in the Middle East, as the Gulf states could simply "buy" a weapon to match whatever Tehran could come up with on its own. Bashir was less worried about a nuclear Iran than he was worried about a hegemonic Iran. He believes that a deal that brings Iran back into the fold is inevitable at some point, but that heightened tensions only serve to increase the price of that deal. The more that Israel (and the international community) hype the menace of Iran, the higher the price that Iran will demand.

¶2. (S/NF) Dibble agreed with this assessment, but reminded Bashir that Iranian internal propaganda is having the desired effect. There is no debate within Iran about whether or not to have a nuclear enrichment program - it is assumed and accepted that it is a national right and duty. There is a kernel of a debate about nuclear weapons, but Dibble called it "private" and limited in scope. In the end, Dibble noted that Khamenei is "the decider" about Iran's nuclear program, and that all others were "apathetic" about the issue.

¶3. (S/NF) Dibble and Bashir spoke about two potential points of leverage on Iran (inflation and refined petroleum products) and one point of leverage that Iran has, but is not using (gas/gas pipelines). Dibble noted that inflation of staples was a growing issue in Iran, but that it was mostly being chalked up to global trends. Iran remains a net importer of refined petroleum products, which could be used as a way to put economic pressure on Iran in the future. Bashir wondered aloud why Iran was not using its strategic position along gas pipeline routes and its own gas reserves as a bargaining chip, especially with countries like Bahrain which are currently unable to import what they need from countries like Qatar.

¶4. (C) Reftel points were also delivered to Muhib Nimrat, U.S. desk officer in the FM's private office. Nimrat noted that he had already seen the U.S. points - they were delivered to the Jordanian Embassy in Tehran by Iranian officials. Saying, "We should continue talking to the Iranians," Nimrat affirmed Jordan's continuing support for a negotiated agreement with Iran about its nuclear program through diplomatic rather than military means.

Visit Embassy Amman's Classified Website at  
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/amman>  
Hale